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fine metrical translation of Prudentius's description of heaven and hell (p. 259), which shows him to be possessed of no mean literary gifts. On the whole the book is to be distinctly commended.

JOHN WINTHROP PLATNER.

Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit. Vergleichende Entwicklungs-
geschichte der führenden Völker Europas und ihres sozialen und
geistigen Lebens. Von KURT BREYSIG. Zweiter Band. Alter-
thum und Mittelalter als Vorstufen der Neuzeit. Zweiter Hälfte.
(Berlin: Georg Bondi. 1902. Pp. xxxix, 519-1443.)

A BOOK with the title of *Kulturgeschichte* comes ill-recommended to American readers. The German word *Kulturgeschichte* is about equivalent to kaleidoscope. A book appears with a number of interesting facts arranged in the frame of some theory, the next book shows the same facts broken up in new combinations; the pictures are brilliant, the books are easy reading, but the increase of knowledge with the turn of the kaleidoscope is desperately small. There are honorable exceptions to this, Lippert's book, for instance, and among the exceptions the present volume by Breysig will take its place. The author is known already to the stricter class of historians by his work on the history of Brandenburg. While he has devoted to the history of the Brandenburg finances and estates the painstaking care in investigation and the sober exposition which those subjects demanded he has taken the opportunity in his lectures at the University of Berlin to develop his gift for generalization in the line of sociology and the philosophy of history, and he presents in this essay the product of a combination of philosopher and historian. It is proper and necessary, as he has said elsewhere, for historians to pause sometimes in their accumulation of details, and to take stock in general terms of the advances that they have made; he has set himself to this task in the present work, of which the first volume appeared in 1900, and which will require a number of volumes yet for its completion.

The volume under review, covering the Middle Ages to the thirteenth century falls into two parts, of which the first is devoted to the rise of Christianity. This topic, more important, as Breysig says, than all others in the spiritual development of mankind, has already been worked up so thoroughly that he has wisely restricted his treatment of it to less than two hundred pages. In that compass he describes, in a rationalistic but thoroughly sympathetic tone, the development of the Christian dogma and the Church, and gives an appreciation of the significance of Christianity to civilization. Breysig treats the religion almost entirely from the standpoint of social, not personal, humanity, and from that standpoint finds the effect of Christ's teachings to have been, in briefest terms, an elevation of the individual, but the repression of personality (p. 602). "Jesus' Religion war aller geistigen, politischen und materiellen Kultur abgeneigt" (p. 587).

The bulk of the volume treats of the Germanic peoples from the time of the migrations through the transition period of the Middle Ages. Some of the sections are characteristic of the old style "history of civilization," discussing topics in literature and science, art and religion, passing from concrete descriptions of individual poems and buildings to broad and vague statements of the relations between the subjects considered, hovering always between the danger of saying something unimportant and the danger of saying something untrue. I will cite only one example of the perils which the author has not always escaped, taken from his discussion of the relation of the papacy to the crusades (pp. 864-865). The first and fourth Crusades, he says, were those most influenced by the Church; it is "characteristic" and furnishes a "vivid proof" of the leadership of the papacy, that both of these Crusades resulted in the foundation of international colonies in the east. Surely it would be hard to distort more completely the significance of the fourth Crusade, and the parts played in it by the papacy and by Venice.

A large part of the book, however, a part to which the reader refers with increasing pleasure and profit, is of a very different kind; the statements are exact, they are thoroughly organized, and they furnish comparisons and conclusions which will be of the greatest assistance to students seeking acquaintance with the broader lines of European political development. This part may be called a comparative constitutional history. Those who followed Breysig's articles in Schmoller's *Jahrbuch* from 1896 on, will find the methods which he applied there so successfully to the period since the Reformation applied now to the early Middle Ages. The organization of Germany, France, England, Italy, the Spanish and Scandinavian states and the Netherlands, is described in terms applicable to all the countries: terms of economic organization in agriculture, commerce and industry; terms of social-political organization, peasant, noble, burgher. Never before has there been brought out so clearly the general similarity in the institutions of the peoples of western Europe, a similarity which stimulates both by likeness and by contrast, and which gives new meaning to the old facts of history. The main features of political and economic organization are suited to a much broader treatment than that which they have generally received, and Breysig shows in handling them an admirable judgment in avoiding insignificance either of detail or of generalization. He has a wholesome distrust of the abstract theories which would distribute influences among the economic, social and political factors in history, and decides each case according to the facts; he grants the decisive influence of an economic factor in one case (rise of the city classes), and denies it in another (rise of the nobility). As the source of his information he is forced of necessity to rely almost entirely on secondary authorities, but he draws them from a wide range and selects them with discrimination.

Breysig calls his book a *Versuch*, and even the part of it to which I have just referred, the most definite and substantial of the book, can be regarded only as a stepping-stone to fuller knowledge. The time was

ripe, however, for such a work, and the work is worthy of the time; students of constitutional history will find no book more helpful in stimulating them to broader views. A feature which will increase its usefulness is a very full table of contents.

CLIVE DAY.

The Early History of Venice. From the Foundation to the Conquest of Constantinople, A. D. 1204. By F. C. HODGSON. (London: George Allen. 1901. Pp. xx, 473.)

MR. HODGSON'S volume aims at presenting the history of Venice on a scale larger than that employed by Mr. Horatio F. Brown and smaller than Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's. A comparison of his work with theirs shows that it fills a field which theirs do not, and has, accordingly, a sufficient reason for being. Mr. Brown's plan precluded elaboration. Mr. Hazlitt is elaborate even to diffuseness, and in spite of all his immense knowledge of Venetian history and life, this diffuseness, coupled with a ponderous style, becomes at times wearisome. Mr. Hodgson, on the other hand, devotes much space to a critical analysis of his material without wholly exhausting the reader's patience. At his best, he is never so vivid as Mr. Hazlitt's best passages but his average is more satisfactory.

Mr. Hodgson differs from both Mr. Brown and Mr. Hazlitt in having made larger use than they of recent German material, and perhaps it is on this account that he inclines to accept their interpretation of some of the moot questions in early Venetian history. Chief among these questions is the determining of the exact relations of Venice to Byzantium during the first four centuries of the Republic's existence. Venetian historians have minimized the dependence; Mr. Hodgson, in common with Gfrörer, and, it should be added, with many earlier writers, seems to regard the dependence as so pressing that we must suppose that the early doges were Byzantine officers. The advocates of this view lay much stress on the facts that several of the doges held the title "*Hypatos*" from the Eastern Emperor, and that "*Magister Militum*" was "the title of a high functionary in the Byzantine Empire," as well as in Venice in the eighth century. But in the absence of final proof, which has not yet been produced, I believe that the other view is preferable. The key to Venetian history down to the twelfth century is the adroitness with which the statesmen of the Lagoons steered their safe course between the Western Empire and the Eastern, always siding, in case of danger, with the more remote. That the Byzantine influence was great, cannot be disputed, but it never, so far as I recall, took the form of political dictation. If Venice had actually been a Byzantine dependency, it is incredible that from 460 to 1160 we should have no record of an attempt to set up imperial governors, or to exert active imperial authority in the Venetian community. Titles, of themselves, prove little, and it is certain that the Venetians rendered lip-service to the Frankish emperors as compliantly as to the Greek: they rendered lip-service, and then went on their own political road undisturbed.